

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-13

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 IO-14 ACDA-19 EUR-25 NIC-01 OMB-01

TRSE-00 EB-11 COME-00 AGR-20 STR-08 JUSE-00 DRC-01

AID-20 IGA-02 /214 W

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R 051625Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2386

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ATHENS 759

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, GR

SUBJECT: FRATRICIDE WITHIN THE "PHOENIX" BROTHERHOOD

1. SUMMARY: MINISTER OF JUSTICE NOW TAKING NECESSARY STEPS THAT WILL PERMIT PROSECUTION FORMER MINISTERS AND OTHER HIGH OFFICIALS PAPADOPOULOS GOVERNMENT ON CHARGES CORRUPTION, GRAFT, EMBEZZLEMENT, ETC. THIS ACTION CONSTITUTES SIGNIFICANT RUPTURE IN RANKS OF 1967 MILITARY REVOLUTIONARIES AND COULD AFFECT FUTURE POLITICAL SITUATION. ACTION PROBABLY COMES AS RESPONSE PRESSURE OF HARD-CORE YOUNGER OFFICERS SUPPORTING IOANNIDES. HOWEVER, IT IS DOUBTFUL WHETHER SHORT-TERM BENEFITS WHICH MIGHT RESULT WILL OFFSET DISRUPTIVE EFFECT OF SUCH PROCEEDINGS BOTH ON ARMY AND ON NATION. END SUMMARY.

2. MAJOR STORY IN BOTH GREEK-LANGUAGE AND ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRESS JANUARY 30 RELATED TO MINISTER OF JUSTICE'S STATEMENT THAT NECESSARY LEGAL STEPS WOULD BE TAKEN TO PERMIT INVESTIGATIONS AND POSSIBLE TRIALS OF MINISTERS AND UNDERSECRETARIES ACCUSED OF MISUSE OF PUBLIC FUNDS AND OTHER CRIMES. (TEXTS OF STATEMENT CONFIDENTIAL

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AND ACT BY SEPARATE AIRGRAMS.) MINISTER STATED THAT

GOVERNMENT IS COMPELLED TO RESPECT FUNDAMENTAL REQUIREMENTS STEMMING FROM "SOCIETY'S SENSE OF JUSTICE" AS RESULT OF RECENT RUMORS OF SCANDALS AND ABUSE PUBLIC FUNDS BY FORMER GOG OFFICIALS. ATHENS 530 AND 437 REPORT ALLEGED ARRESTS OF SEVERAL PAPADOPOULOS REGIME OFFICIALS APPARENTLY LINKED WITH 1973 MEAT IMPORTATION SCANDAL. LATEST STATEMENT MINISTER OF JUSTICE APPEARS TO INDICATE THAT FUTURE INVESTIGATIVE ACTIONS WILL INVOLVE EVEN BROADER AREAS OF MINISTERIAL MISDEEDS.

3. MINISTER OF JUSTICE CITED ARMED FORCES COMMUNIQUE NOVEMBER 25, 1973 AND PM ANDROUTSOPOULOS' POLICY STATEMENT NOVEMBER 28 AS BASIS FOR CURRENT GOVERNMENT ACTION, I.E. MEETING ITS COMMITMENT TO "CLEANSE AND RAISE STANDARD OF PUBLIC LIFE." MINISTER DECLARED THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO HOLD LEGAL INQUIRY SO THAT THOSE MINISTERS, UNDERSECRETARIES AND ACCESSORIES WHO EITHER MISUSED PUBLIC FUNDS OR COMMITTED CRIMES INVOLVING BAD FAITH HARMFUL TO PUBLIC INTEREST WOULD SUFFER SAME LEGAL PENALTIES AS ANY CITIZEN VIOLATING THE LAW.

4. IN ORDER PROCEED PROMPTLY WITH INVESTIGATIONS, JUSTICE MINISTER STIPULATED NEED TO LIFT CERTAIN CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL OBSTACLES, I.E. SUSPENSION OF ARTICLE 94 OF CONSTITUTION AND SUSPENSION OF ARTICLES 9 THROUGH 47 LEGISLATIVE DECREE 802. COMMENT: SINCE BOTH THESE REFERENCES STIPULATED THAT PARLIAMENTARY ACTION REQUIRED TO COMMENCE LEGAL PROCEEDINGS AGAINST MINISTERS AND UNDERSECRETARIES, GOVERNMENT EVIDENTLY CONSIDERS THEIR SUSPENSION NECESSARY IN ORDER INSURE MAINTENANCE LEGAL PROPRIETIES. JUSTICE MINISTER ALSO DECLARED THAT ARTICLE 48 OF LEGISLATIVE DECREE 802 "IS DEEMED UNCONSTITUTIONAL IN THAT IT WAS ENACTED IN VIOLATION OF AUTHORITY GRANTED BY CONSTITUTION." ARTICLE 48 IS A TRANSITIONAL PROVISION WHICH DECLARED THAT UNTIL FIRST PARLIAMENT MET AS BODY, ITS COMPETENCIES WOULD BE EXERCISED BY THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. MINISTER OF JUSTICE EVIDENTLY SENSITIVE TO PRIOR CRITICISM THIS PROVISION LD-802 WHICH HAD BEEN VOICED EDITORIALY BY TO VIMA IN OCTOBER 1972. THRUST OF TO VIMA CRITICISM WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT SINCE ARTICLE 48 IN EFFECT PERMITTED MINISTERS TO SIT IN JUDGMENT ON THEMSELVES, IT WOULD BE UNLIKELY THAT ANY MINISTERS WOULD BE CHARGED WITH MISCONDUCT DURING TRANSITIONAL PERIOD.

5. JUSTICE MINISTER STATED THAT CONSTITUENT ACT WOULD BE ENACTED SOON SPELLING OUT NEW LEGAL PROCEDURES AND SPECIFYING THAT OFFENSES OF MINISTERS AND UNDERSECRETARIES

WOULD BE MADE SUBJECT TO JURISDICTION LOCAL SPECIAL
COURTS MARTIAL. WHEN MARTIAL LAW LIFTED, SAME OFFENSES
WOULD BE BROUGHT BEFORE SPECIAL COURT COMPOSED OF MEMBERS
SUPREME COURT AND APPEALS COURTS, PRESIDENT OF SUPREME
COURT PRESIDING.

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R 051625Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2387

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ATHENS 759

6. ACTION OF JUSTICE MINISTER AND ALLEGED ARRESTS OF
FORMER PAPADOPOULOS OFFICIALS (SEE ATHENS 641) CONSTITUTE
BREACH IN RANKS OF THOSE ASSOCIATED WITH 1967 REVOLUTION.
ONCE SUCH PROCEEDINGS BEGUN, PROCESS COULD PROVE DIFFICULT
TO CONTROL. SHOULD MAJOR FIGURES IN PAPADOPOULOS
GOVERNMENT ACTUALLY BE BROUGHT TO TRIAL AND SUBSEQUENTLY
CONVICTED ON CHARGES GRAFT, EMBEZZLEMENT, ETC., IT WOULD
DISCREDIT CHIEF LEADERS 1967 COUP. SINCE CURRENT
REGIME CLAIMS TO SHARE SAME IDEALS AND OBJECTIVES AS
1967 COUP GROUP, ITS CREDENTIALS COULD THEN ALSO BE
SUSPECT. PRESENT EXERCISE MIGHT MORE CYNICALLY BE
VIEWED BY PEOPLE IN METAPHORICAL TERMS AS ACT OF
CANNIBALISM BY CHILDREN OF 1967 REVOLUTION AGAINST THEIR
PROGENITORS.

7. CURRENT GOVERNMENT MAY HOPE ITS DECLARED INTENTION
TO PUNISH MINISTERIAL MISCREANTS WILL WIN POPULAR

ACCLAIM, AT LEAST IN SHORT TERM. PERHAPS HOPE IS THAT
PINNING MISDEEDS INVOLVING GRAFT, EMBEZZLEMENT, ETC. ON
PAPADOPOULOS REGIME WILL BUY TIME NEEDED TO DEAL WITH
PRESSING ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. HOWEVER, IN PURSUIT
THESE SHORT-TERM ADVANTAGES GOG MAY BE TEMPORARILY
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BLINDED TO RISK THAT ARMY ITSELF MAY BE
DISCREDITED SINCE MANY OF PRIME SUSPECTS WERE FORMER
ARMY OFFICERS (E.G. KOSTAS PAPADOPOULOS, MICHAEL
(BALOPOULOS). THE PURGING OF EX-LEADERS OF THE REGIME
FOR CORRUPTION MAY TURN OUT TO BE A VERY SLIPPERY
SLOPE INDEED.

8. IT IS LIKELY THAT MAIN REASON BEHIND THIS STEP OF
GOVERNMENT IS PRESSURE FROM HARD-LINE, PURITANICAL YOUNGER
OFFICERS SUPPORTING BRIG. GENERAL IOANNIDES. WHILE
IOANNIDES' ORIGINAL INTENT MIGHT HAVE BEEN TO SPARE
PAPADOPOULOS REGIME FROM INVESTIGATION OR PROSECUTION,
STRENGTH OF DEMANDS FOR "JUSTICE AND CLEANSING" BY HIS
SINGLE-MINDED SUPPORTERS MUST HAVE CONVINCED HIM OF
WISDOM ADOPTING OPPOSITE TACTIC IN HIS OWN INTEREST.
EMBOFFS HAVE REPEATEDLY HEARD FROM VARIOUS SOURCES THAT
IOANNIDES' YOUNGER ASSOCIATES WERE PRESSING FOR
SUCH ACTION. THERE ARE ALSO REPORTS THAT RETIRED COL.
STAMATELOPOULOS ALREADY MIGHT POSE ALTERNATIVE FOCUS
OF LOYALTY TO YOUNGER REVOLUTIONARY
OFFICERS BECAUSE HE TAKES POSITION THAT WRONG-DOERS OF
PAPADOPOULOS REGIME MUST BE PUNISHED.
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